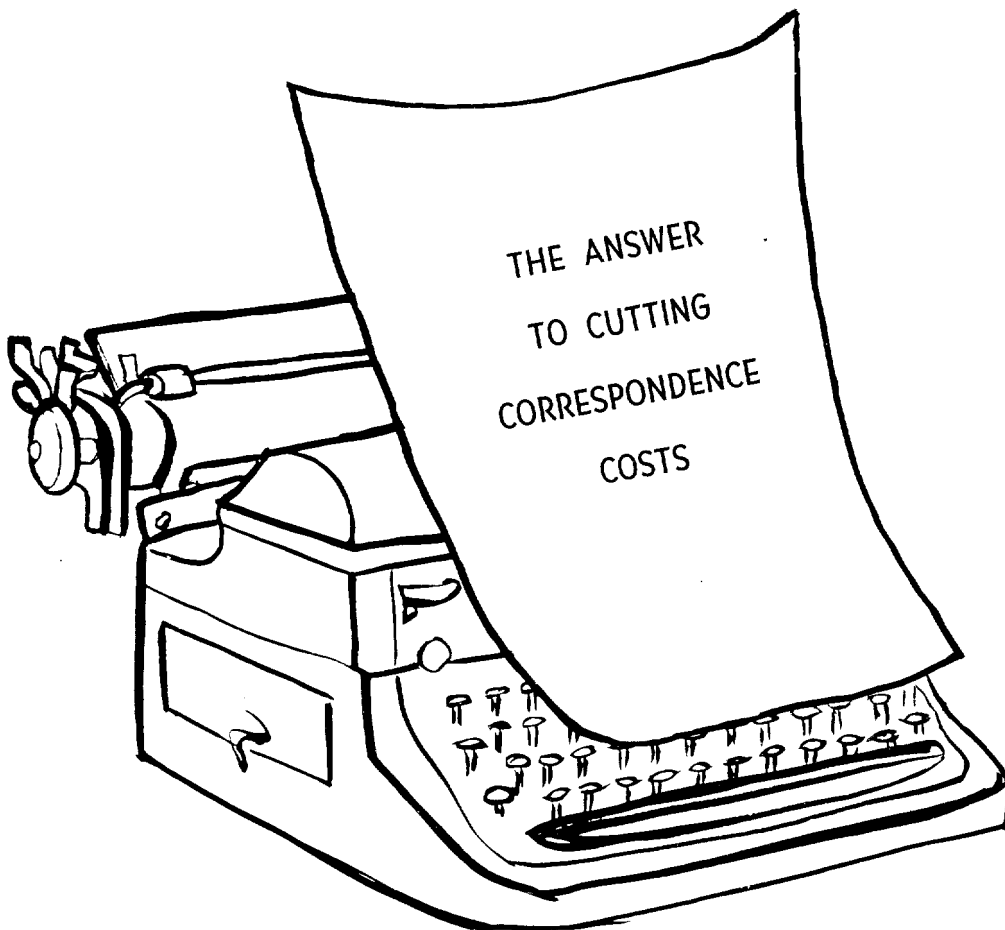
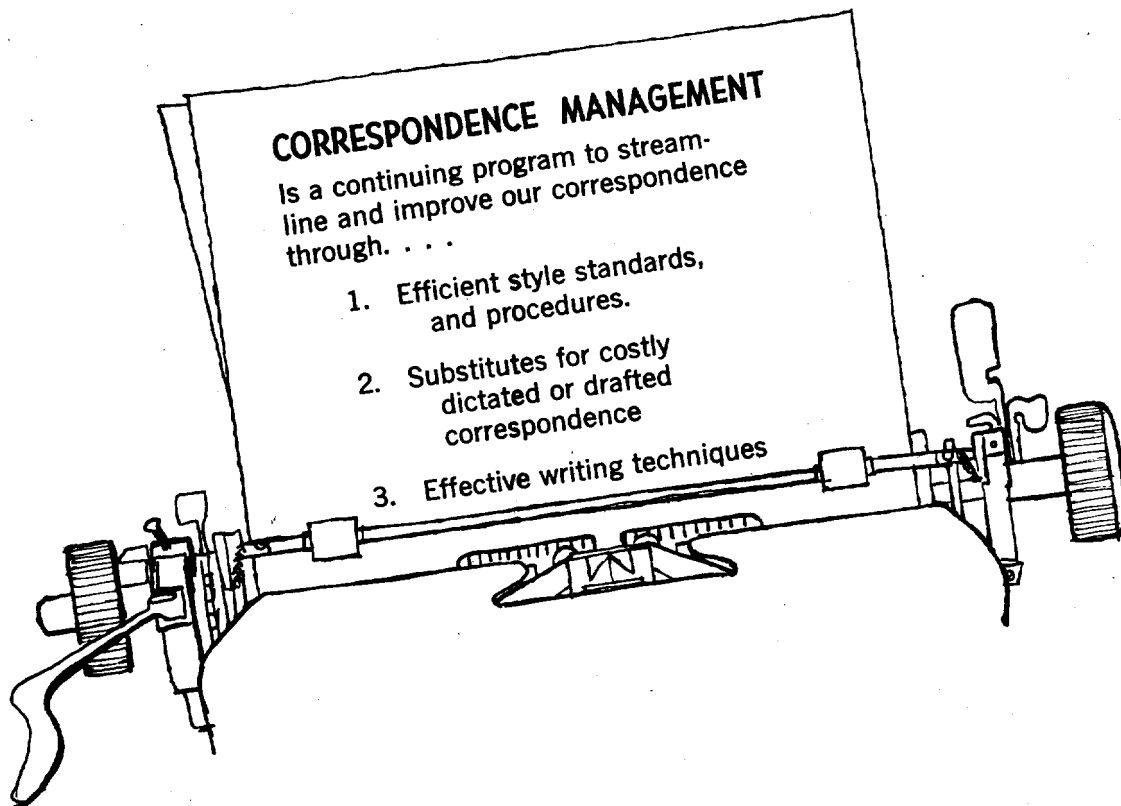


# CORRESPONDENCE MANAGEMENT



MANAGEMENT STAFF  
RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
NOVEMBER 1954



**THE RESULTS...**

- ▶ BETTER correspondence prepared by speedier, simpler, and more economical means.
- ▶ LESS correspondence to manage, dispose of, and store.

CORRESPONDENCE MANAGEMENT IS A PREVENTIVE AND CORRECTIVE TOOL TO BE APPLIED AT ONE OF THE MAIN ROOTS OF OUR RECORDS CREATION PROBLEM. THUS IT IS A VITAL PART OF THE AGENCY'S RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.

## HOW DOES CORRESPONDENCE MANAGEMENT MEET THE RECORDS CREATION PROBLEM?

The written word is expensive! Drafted or dictated correspondence costs from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per page. A glance at your reading files (and some simple multiplication) will quickly tell you that a major cost is involved.

### BUT CORRESPONDENCE COSTS CAN BE CUT!

- ▶ Rewrites and retypes can be avoided.
- ▶ Routine dictated or drafted correspondence can be replaced by less expensive substitutes.
- ▶ The creation of nonessential copies can be prevented.

Here's how you can make correspondence management work for you.

1. ADHERE TO AGENCY STYLE STANDARDS AND CORRESPONDENCE HANDLING PROCEDURES.

Uniformity is essential to efficient correspondence operations. It prevents confusion and misunderstanding and thus speeds work production. Faster training and increased utilization of personnel also result.

Agency correspondence standards provide this uniformity. They were adopted from many tested systems and a consideration of Agency-wide preferences and needs. These standards will be revised when necessary. You can help! Your suggestions for their improvement will always be welcome.

2. STRIVE FOR A STREAMLINED EFFECTIVE WRITING STYLE. Here are a few tips.

#### USE...

Short words--about 165 syllables to 100 words.  
Short sentences, averaging 17 to 23 words.  
Personal references whenever possible.  
The ACTIVE rather than the passive voice.  
A clear, concise, sinewy sentence structure.

#### AVOID USING...

Annoying governmental jargon, trite phrases, and obsolete expressions.  
Flowery or 'high hat' language.  
Negative statements.  
The overworked preposition.

APPLY...

The four "S's"---Simplicity, Sincerity, Shortness, and Strength.

Concise, clear writing has a far reaching effect. Less time is needed to read and understand it. Misinterpretations are avoided; good relations are maintained. We can't all be literary masters. We can strive, however, to rid our writing of the more common barriers to effective communication.

3. USE FORM LETTERS (OR MEMOS) AND PATTERN CORRESPONDENCE WHENEVER POSSIBLE. They eliminate...

UNNECESSARY  
DICTATING



UNNECESSARY  
TYPING



UNNECESSARY  
REVIEWING



UNNECESSARY  
FILING

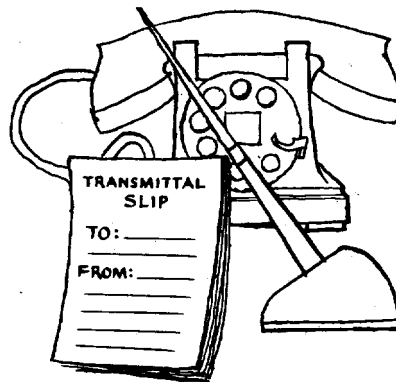


They speed up operations and simplify training by standardizing repetitive procedures.

4. USE A LESS EXPENSIVE SUBSTITUTE FOR TYPEWRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

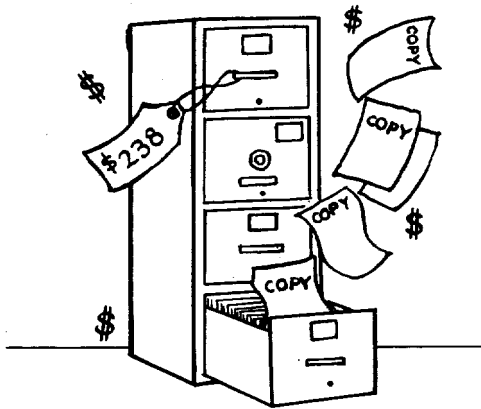
Is a typed memo always necessary? If not, dash off a note by hand on Standard Form No. 64 (the blue half sheet Office Memorandum) or on a transmittal slip.

How about those transmittal memos you've been using? Are they all necessary? Perhaps a hand-filled "buck slip" will do. Or better still, consider revising the format of the material being transmitted to provide spaces for "To," "From," and "Signature," and eliminate the transmittal correspondence entirely.



Does every instruction or decision have to be in writing? Let's handle more of our routine business by telephone, or personal contact if convenient.

5. BE SURE EVERY COPY IS NEEDED.



Copies are costly! They add to the volume of records the Agency must handle, store, and dispose of. They slow down typing operations. Often typing and proofreading time is doubled when that "one extra copy" makes two typings necessary. Put a price tag on each copy. Route a single one to several offices if time and circumstances permit.

**COUNT YOUR COPIES; MAKE YOUR COPIES COUNT!**

### HOW IS CORRESPONDENCE MANAGEMENT ADMINISTERED?

It is proposed that correspondence management be administered throughout the Agency on a decentralized basis—that is, through area programs serving specific components. The Reports and Correspondence Management Branch, Management Staff, will provide staff guidance in planning and conducting these area programs.

Let's briefly see how an area program is conducted.

#### STEP 1 - PLAN YOUR FACT FINDING

You'll need to get facts by several means. Consider these methods in your plans...

- ▶ An inventory of unanswered correspondence.
- ▶ Employee interviews.
- ▶ Observations of the flow and handling of correspondence.
- ▶ Analyses of sample correspondence. Two sources are generally available—reading files or extra copies collected over a sampling period.

## STEP 2 - GET ALL THE FACTS

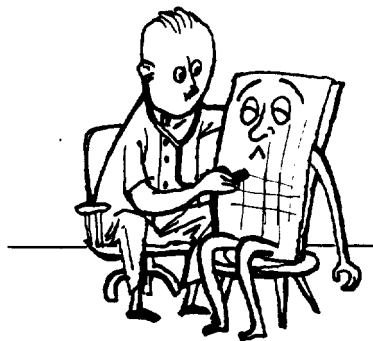
You'll want answers to the following questions about your correspondence...

How does it flow to and from your office? What is the average time lapse between its receipt and the release of a reply or acknowledgement? What percentage is dictated or drafted? How much is of such a repetitive nature that form or pattern correspondence could be used? Upon review, what percentage is returned for re-write or retype? To what extent is it below average in quality? How much could be replaced by informal notes or personal contact? Are unnecessary copies being prepared?



## STEP 3 - ANALYZE AND IMPROVE

Look for ways to remove these barriers to the flow and production of correspondence...



Nonessential control, review, and concurrences.

Undefined quality standards.

The preparation of nonessential copies.

Nonconformance with standard Agency styles and correspondence handling procedures.

Your analysis will also disclose how form letters (or memos), pattern correspondence, and other cost-cutting substitutes for dictated correspondence can be used. With standards furnished by the Management Staff you will be able to determine writing faults and how to correct them. Plans for a continuing correspondence management program should also be laid.

Correspondence management, like a prescription, contains several remedial ingredients. A Staff member will be pleased to discuss correspondence management with you and recommend a program to meet your needs. Call extension 3742.

